

The FAA Airport Safety Newsletter

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The FAA ASNL

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

On this, the inaugural edition of the Airports quarterly newsletter, I'd like to define the 'mission' of this publication:

AIRPORT SAFETY!

We hope to use the newsletter as a vehicle for discussing airport safety issues and providing our insights on them. Hopefully, we will be able identify trends and problem areas before they develop and hurt people and destroy equipment and property.

The electronic age and the ability to reach out through the "information super highway" make this newsletter feasible. Each quarter we will publish and list a new issue on the Internet FAA Airports Web site. Tentative publication dates for the remainder of this year are August 20, and November 19. A pertinent airport safety subject will be featured in each issue. The first few issues will be directed at Runway Incursions.

If you don't already realize the gravity of this problem – realize it now! In this issue, we discuss what the various members of the aviation community can do to reduce the risk. The follow-on issues will concentrate on vehicle operations and airfield marking, signs, and lights.

This will only work if you contribute – challenge – support – expand and participate. We welcome your ideas, suggestions, and comments. Let us know what you think – what will make the existing system better?

By working together and sharing ideas we'll find solutions to the runway incursion problem, and by spreading the word we can make the system safer in a shorter period of time. Together we'll do it better than we ever could do it alone.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

.....Robert E. David

Below: You are at the Hold Line. Now, have you got a clearance?



Safety Business

As airports become increasingly congested, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the entire aviation community must pay more attention to the safety of ground operations. The complexity of today's operations have the potential for creating unsafe conditions, especially where aircraft, vehicles, and even pedestrians may find themselves on active runways in direct conflict with arriving and departing aircraft. Such runway incursions can have tragic results.

Because many runway incursions are the result of problems with increased numbers of operations, increases in construction and support activities on and around airports, pilot/controller communications, ground navigation, or situational awareness, runway incursion prevention efforts must have a human factors focus. As part of the systemic approach to finding solutions to the runway incursion problem, the human factors element requires us to step back and look at how we conduct ground control and the movement of aircraft and vehicles.

One might ask, "Ok, so what can I do?" The answer is that every one who has a reason to operate on the airport surface or who controls/clears traffic for operations on the airport surface can do a lot. In short, we all

have to sign up to the concept that "Safety is Everybody's Business."

Flight Crews can help reduce runway incursions by:

1. Obtaining clearances and visually checking before crossing or entering active runways.
2. Reading back all instructions, whether required or not.
3. Insuring familiarity with the airport layout **prior** to taxiing/landing by reviewing cockpit procedures to insure runway/taxiway and ramp familiarity **prior** to any surface movement
4. Requesting progressive taxi instructions if unfamiliar with the airport or if disoriented.
5. Turning on exterior lights to aid visibility and conspicuity
6. Limiting tasks to be accomplished while taxiing
7. Confirming current ATIS information

Air Traffic Controllers can help reduce runway incursions by:

1. Standardizing/improving coordination between local and ground positions
2. Requesting readback of instructions
3. Using standard phraseology at all times
4. Exercising extra caution when coordinators are absent or positions are combined
5. Assure that ATIS is current and acknowledged by flight crews

Airport Operators can help reduce runway incursions by:

1. Controlling access to the Airport Operations Area (AOA)
2. Assuring competency of all drivers on the AOA

3. Assuring that signs/markings are clear, clean, well lighted, and correctly positioned

4. Insure that NOTAMs are current and construction areas are well marked and lighted

5. Coordinating safety plans with all affected parties

6. Providing remedial training for violators of ground vehicle rules/ regulations

Support/Maintenance personnel can help reduce runway incursions by:

1. Being aware of and advising responsible persons of potential hazards

2. Using extreme caution when operating vehicles around aircraft

3. Being sure to obtain proper clearances (including self-clearing on non-towered airports) before operating vehicles on or around taxiways, runways, or aircraft run-up areas.

Everyone can help reduce runway incursions by:

1. **Stopping**, when in doubt, and verifying the action about to be taken

2. **Remembering** that ***Safety is Everybody's business***

Below: Failure to stop and give aircraft the right-of-way can result in a catastrophic event. Wingspans of most large air carrier aircraft extend up to 50 feet from the fuselage. Clearances are important for both aircraft and vehicles!
Photo from FAA files



Runway Incursion Statistics

January – April 1999

| Month | OE | PD | V/PD | Total |
|----------|----|----|------|-----------|
| January | 6 | 18 | 5 | 29 |
| February | 7 | 11 | 4 | 22 |
| March | 3 | 9 | 1 | 13 |
| April | 6 | 17 | 5 | 24 |
| Total | 22 | 55 | 15 | 92 |

January – April 1998

| Month | OE | PD | V/PD | Total |
|--------------|----|----|------|-----------|
| January | 7 | 13 | 5 | 25 |
| February | 4 | 16 | 1 | 21 |
| March | 9 | 15 | 1 | 25 |
| April | 6 | 18 | 2 | 26 |
| Total | 26 | 62 | 9 | 97 |

Legend

Runway Incursion (FAA Order 8020.11A, Ch.1 Par 5): Any occurrence at an airport involving an aircraft, vehicle, person, or object on the ground that creates a collision hazard or results in loss of separation with an aircraft taking off, intending to take off, landing, or intending to land.

OE = Operational Error, attributable to an incorrect directive from ATC

PD = Pilot Deviation, attributable to an incorrect action by a pilot entering a movement area without proper clearance

V/PD = Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviation, attributable to an incorrect action by a person in a vehicle or on foot who enters the movement area without proper clearance.

Quarterly Vignette #1



Here are a couple of events that recently occurred on airports, as reported to FAA, This type of event can have tragic consequences. Fortunately, these did not result in accidents.

Event 1. Unidentified truck crossed Runway 8 from east to west without authorization.

Event 2. First Aid vehicle, not on call, proceeded on Taxiway India without authorization.

These events occurred on the same day, at separate airports, one on the east coast and one out west. Both are indicative of the type of VPD that can be addressed by interviewing the drivers and finding out whether there was a communications problem, a lapse in procedures, or a careless attitude. If these drivers regularly have access to the airport movement areas and are involved in this type of event, then FAA encourages the airports to require remedial training. Repeat violations, however, warrant further action. The bottom line consists of finding out the cause and addressing it!